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English C&I/Supervisory  
Reflection Paper

The strategy I elected to try in my classroom was small group discussion generated by use of an anticipation guide. The small group discussion provided an opportunity for students to "practice" speaking aloud and sharing their answers with classmates. Using the anticipation guide served dual purposes. It served not only as the basis for class discussion;--but-also as the intro activity for our class reading of "Liberty," by Julia Alvarez. I wanted students to be excited about reading this story. I wanted them to realize that they can be valuable contributors to a discussion, and that what they think and say matters to their teachers and their classmates.

I was so pleased to receive the feedback from my observers. I found out that two of my students who normally do not participate in class discussions were very active in the small group discussions. One of my observers told me that they were actually more participatory when neither I nor my CT was sitting with them. This was very encouraging news to me, and it has prompted me to think about other ways I can utilize small group discussion in the classroom. I know that students sometimes feel intimidated when working with or comparing their answers with other students. I was worried that students would not participate in this discussion, or that groups would be dominated by one or two students. However, it proved not to be the case at all. Observers reported that natural leaders emerged within groups, but did not dominate group discussion. As I circulated among groups, I checked to see that all students had a chance to give their answers. I then observed as groups members engaged each other's answers. I also engaged in the discussion when I felt that students had not considered different possibilities or were extremely rigid in their views.

After allowing students about twenty minutes in small group discussions, I had students reassemble in their original seats. I then asked if any students felt that there was an issue that was pressing, one that they'd like to discuss as a whole class. Students wanted to discuss numbers four and one. It was at this time that I saw even more participation from my students, including one student that doesn't normally speak up in class. She had a strong opinion about the statement that named education as the key to success in life. In her answer, she took into consideration the fact that an education encompasses more than what one learns in the classroom. She focused on the need for "common sense" in addition to the type of education one learns in school. It was encouraging to hear this student offer her opinion in the whole class discussion.

I was able to see so much more of the happenings during the class by reviewing the video recording. Although I took note of the footage that showed a few of my students applying make-up and looking in mirrors, I was more focused on observing the dynamic conversations that occurred while I was working with other groups. The recording provided an opportunity for me to watch another of my quieter students engaging in discussions with her group. Later, after the whole class reassembled in their original seats, this student also offered a contribution to our discussion.

This footage was valuable because I noticed certain aspects of my teaching that I want to improve upon, such as speaking more slowly when I read aloud and increasing the length of wait time. When I am in front of the class, it seems as though I am waiting an eternity for a student to respond. However, after reviewing the video recording I found that it was only a few seconds. I now know that I can afford to wait longer than I have been. I also noticed some things that I feel I did well. Although I did spend a significant amount of time with each group, I feel that it was

worth the time. I really engaged in conversations with each group, rather than perform a quick check-up, in which I simply take the students' word that they have done what was asked of them.

I noticed that I maintain eye contact with my students as I talk to them, and I give them nonverbal signs, such as a head nod or a smile, that I am paying attention to what they are saying. I want to continue doing that. I believe that it establishes trust between me and my students, and that they will come to know that I listen when they speak.

